

Inclusive and Effective Messaging for Climate Policy Advocacy

Inclusive Messaging	
Best Practice	What to Do
<p>Speak to shared values.</p> <p>Make the connection between your comments and the issue(s) that matter most to them. Affirm your shared values.</p>	<p>Define values you share with the lawmaker in advance, e.g. economic opportunity, solutions and hope for the future, caring for the most vulnerable/social justice, or preparedness.</p> <p>Make the connection: COVID matters most to people right now. Lawmakers’ constituents are hurting, unemployed, and businesses are suffering. This will be top of mind. They will want to hear business priorities for getting the economy back on track. Speak to solutions (in our Principles and Recommendations) that make us stronger, revive the economy, create well-paying jobs, AND address the next threat we face, climate change.</p> <p>Carefully research what is most personally relevant to your elected officials to make your message most effective.</p>
<p>Speak in their language, not yours.</p> <p><i>“If you want to reach someone, speak their language.”</i></p>	<p>Consider your framing and language. Though you may be motivated by the environmental risks of climate change, conservatives may not be moved. You can instead frame climate issues around jobs, national security, economic risk, rural prosperity, preparedness, and health (Studies show rural voters respond to framing our moral responsibility to future generations, agricultural community prosperity, and natural climate solutions).</p> <p>Don’t exaggerate. Use accurate and measured speech. Climate skeptics believe the risks of climate change are greatly exaggerated. Hyperbolic speech can trigger them to dismiss you. Calling climate change a “looming catastrophe” may be accurate, but may not be useful for all audiences to hear.</p>
<p>Bring in trusted voices.</p> <p>People are more inclined to accept a message from someone in their cultural group.</p>	<p>If you are meeting with a Republican, it is ideal if you can bring other R’s too if possible.</p>

Effective Messaging

Best Practice	What to Do
<p>Hone a simple message.</p> <p><i>“Use simple, clear messages, repeated often, by a variety of trusted voices.” - Dr. Ed Maibach, George Mason U.</i></p>	<p>Write a simple clear message and practice it. Say it often in the conversation. When possible, use visual and verbal images to communicate it. A Republican strategist once said <i>“I’ll take repetition, and you take the truth. I’ll beat you every time.”</i> The less you say, the more you are heard. Say that which has the most value, and say it often. See our recommended messaging for summer 2020 in our “Messaging on A Climate-Smart Recovery” document.</p>
<p>Tell your story.</p> <p>Share your values though strong, empowering, emotive storytelling.</p>	<p>Facts rarely change minds. When you pull out your facts, they pull out theirs. Research shows us that change happens not when you make people think differently, but when you make people <i>feel</i> differently. Unfortunately, people often say they want to appeal to others’ hearts, but continue to use facts with little emotion.</p> <p>You are a Main St America business and job creator. Your story matters and can move lawmakers. Think through what outcomes and feelings you want them to walk away with, and shape your story around that. The emotions you evoke will make you and your message memorable.</p>
<p>Inspire them.</p> <p>Don’t just spread doom and gloom. Focus on solutions.</p>	<p>Offer hope and actionable solutions. Climate dystopia can overwhelm people, making them feel helpless to the point that they may ignore it. Offer solutions that make them feel like they can make a difference.</p> <p>Address lawmakers’ key problems in your solutions, and leave a hand-out with recommendations (i.e. if COVID economic recovery is the priority, frame comments around how taking action on climate offers solutions through well-paying jobs).</p>
<p>Make it easy for them to act.</p>	<p>Give them a short list of recommendations.</p>
<p>Nurture the relationship.</p> <p>Think long-term, not “one and done.”</p>	<p>Follow-up with a thank you e mail or note, a picture for the newspaper, emails to the legislative aide, contributions, etc., and view this as an ongoing relationship you will revisit in future meetings.</p>
<p>Make your audience the hero of the story.</p>	<p>Clearly communicate that they can make a difference. Make them the hero, not the villain. Frame their action in terms of their legacy. <i>“How we rebuild America is how we will be remembered.”</i> - Young conservatives fighting for a clean future.</p>
<p>Establish why you are a credible voice whose ideas are worth listening to.</p>	<p>You are a constituent and a job creator. What you are doing already to address climate change gives you credibility. Communicate how climate is impacting your business.</p>